



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**VOLUNTEER FLORIDA ENCOURAGES EVERYONE
TO DONATE WISELY FOR HURRICANE RELIEF**

*Visit volunteerflorida.org for a list of
appropriate items to donate ...*

STATE EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTER, TALLAHASSEE – The Governor's Commission on Volunteerism and Community Service, Volunteer Florida, commends Floridians for their tremendous response to the needs of Hurricane Katrina victims. The level of caring and desire to assist has been unprecedented.

In order to ensure that your efforts are as effective as possible, Volunteer Florida is providing the following information to everyone who wants to donate.

Financial Contributions are Greatly Needed:

Financial contributions help to avoid the labor and expense of sorting, packing, transporting and distributing donated goods, and voluntary relief agencies can use cash to meet hurricane victims' specific needs more quickly. Please continue to give. Financial gifts, no matter how small, are vitally important now. Please visit our web site at volunteerflorida.org for a list of relief organizations.

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Donations of Clothing and Household Goods:

In-kind clothing donations are best when they come from companies that can provide new items in quantities to meet the mass-care needs of victims. Unsolicited, spontaneous donations of clothing from individuals and community groups, although well intentioned, have hidden costs and pose a number of complications for initial relief efforts.

At this time, relief agencies are **not** collecting clothing items for victims of the storm. Collections of clothing items require valuable and scarce resources to sort, clean, and distribute them. This comes at the expense of critical emergency activities relief workers are attempting to perform. In addition, it is impossible to know if spontaneously donated items will be appropriate for the relief effort.

Volunteer Florida does not accept small-quantity donations of clothing or household goods for hurricane relief.

“If you are considering collecting items for donation, it is very important to confirm the need before you start,” said Volunteer Florida CEO Wendy Spencer. “We absolutely do not want to discourage people who want to help, but donating **only** the items listed on volunteerflorida.org to organized collection sites, or making a financial gift to support relief organizations, really are the best ways for people to help after a disaster like this.”

What Items are Needed?

Volunteer Florida encourages everyone to donate **water** and **non-perishable, ready-to-eat food items**, to local, organized collection sites. While making a financial gift to the relief organization of your choice still is the **best** way to help, Floridians also can help by contributing the urgently needed items listed on our Web site to help victims of Hurricane Katrina.

Examples of “ready-to-eat” food items include breakfast bars, ready-to-feed baby food, cereal, meals ready to eat (MREs), peanut butter, jelly, crackers, pop-top canned items, and any non-perishables that can be opened and consumed without the aid of can openers or other utensils.

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More supplies will be needed in the coming weeks and months. The Volunteer Florida Web site, located at volunteerflorida.org, will be updated daily, if not more often, with an updated “needed items” list, as well as comprehensive information resources about how you can help the victims of Hurricane Katrina.

Organized collection drives are in progress throughout Florida. Donors should check their local media outlets for the locations of collection sites in their areas.

The Governor’s Commission on Volunteerism and Community Service was established in 1994 by the Florida Legislature to administer grants under the National and Community Service Trust Act of 1993. The Commission grants funds to Florida AmeriCorps and National Service programs; encourages volunteerism for everyone from youths to seniors to people with disabilities; promotes volunteerism in emergency management and preparedness; and helps to strengthen and expand Volunteer Centers in Florida.

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www.volunteerflorida.org

